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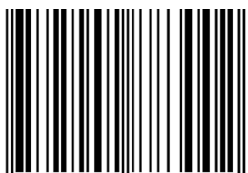
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GARRY



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2025-26 Hunter Business Function Guide

See this year's function guide between pages 10 and 11 of this issue



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From the Editor



The latest inflation figures released on 30 July indicate a good chance of a series of interest rates cuts in coming months, something that is badly needed for businesses and consumers with the weak performance of the Australian economy.

Headline CPI declined from an annualised rate of 2.4% in the March quarter to 2.1% in the June quarter, lower than most market expectations and forecasts.

This is at the lower end of the 2-3% target range of the RBA, so there should be nothing

stopping a number of interest rates cuts.

There seems to be little discussion about the fact that the Australian economy has been basically in a per capita recession for around two years.

The latest GDP figures available, to March 2025, showed a quarterly GDP rise of just 0.2% for an annualised increase of 1.3%.

But in terms of per capita, GDP was down by 0.2% for the quarter and down 0.4% for the year to end of March.

The expectations are for similar figures for the June quarter with possibly a worse annualised rate.

On top of this the global conditions are unstable, particularly with the current tariff campaign by the United States. It looks like most of Australian exports to the US will be only subject to the

lower rate of 10% and being only around 5% of total exports, the real danger to Australia is reduced global economic activity and the possibility of trade wars, particularly if China is involved.

Exports to China last year were over \$100 billion, so any negative impacts on their economy have the potential to severely impact the Australian economy.

Currently the Australian Government does not appear to have a plan on how to improve the economy, although it is hoped that some positive measures will arise from this month's Economic Reform Roundtable. The Federal Government needs to consider all subjects raised in the Roundtable, including those that they are not necessarily what they want to hear. We will await with strong interest on the outcomes, not just the talk.

So, back to interest rates, the Australian economy can benefit greatly from a series of interest rate cuts to boost investment and spending. But this may not be enough to markedly boost the sluggish economy, so it is hoped that some true economic reform is not too far away.

Garry Hardie
Editor and Publisher

ON THE FRONT COVER

Babbingtons Restaurant & Bar, located inside the Apollo International Hotel in Charlestown



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Final master plan design for Clean Energy Precinct

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, has unveiled the final design of Australia's most advanced clean energy production project, signalling the Precinct's readiness to the global energy market.

On 4 July Minister Bowen was joined at Port of Newcastle's Clean Energy Precinct (CEP) by Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Sharon Claydon MP, and Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen MP said "The Hunter has been an industrial and economic powerhouse for decades, making the Port of Newcastle an ideal location for a Clean Energy Precinct that can support decarbonisation of heavy industry and connect Australia's renewable resources to the world.

"The Albanese Labor Government is supporting industrial regions like the Hunter to take advantage of the economic and job opportunities that come with reliable renewable energy."

Port of Newcastle CEO Craig Carmody said the milestone was the Precinct's biggest to date since the \$100 million investment by the Commonwealth Government.

"The final design for the Clean Energy Precinct is an important milestone in the project and for the future of clean energy in the Hunter region. This is the design that Port of Newcastle is offering global clean energy production companies and directs the planning approvals the Port will be seeking."

FEED and EIS studies are underway at the CEP and are due for completion at the end of 2025. Mr Carmody said these studies, along with results from community and Traditional Owner consultation, have informed the design and concept planning approvals. These approvals will allow for expedited construction



of the different production facilities, making the CEP Australia's most mature and attractive clean energy project for investment.

"We are building for the future of our region, city, and port. As the design shows, we can accommodate different forms of clean energy, including ammonia and hydrogen. Port of Newcastle has always said we are agnostic when it comes to the type of clean energy produced at the Port's Clean Energy Precinct.

"Our job is to ensure that, when coal finally declines, we still have energy from the Hunter and Newcastle to export to the world. This design proves this goal can be achieved.

"We have received strong international interest in occupying these sites, particularly from partners in Germany, Japan and South Korea. This level of global engagement demonstrates the confidence that leading economies have in Port of Newcastle's vision and Australia's potential as a clean energy powerhouse.

"Alongside Port of Newcastle's other strategic diversification projects, the CEP will ensure Port of Newcastle remains a resilient, future-focused gateway for Australia's trade and energy needs," Mr Carmody said.

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Lot 11, 83 Jonathan Street, Eleebana

Privately positioned in a quiet cul-de-sac and backing onto tranquil bush reserve, this spacious two storey family home on a rare 2,208m² approx. block offers privacy, leafy outlooks and no rear neighbours. The existing layout includes 3/4 bedrooms, multiple living areas and scope to renovate, extend or completely rebuild to suit your vision.

Just minutes to Lake Macquarie foreshore, Warners Bay Shopping Centre, schools, cafes and walking trails, this is a prime opportunity in a sought after location, ideal for families, renovators or anyone looking to create their dream home.

Disclaimer: The Agent declares a financial interest in this property.

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Each unit comprises 4.5m roller door clearance, minimum 6m internal clearance, fibre connected, quality kitchenette, accessible amenities and allocated parking. A selection of units also with mezzanine floor.

Located within the Cardiff Industrial Estate, close to Costco and Bunnings, these units are central to both Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

15 units are being offered for lease or for sale with vacant possession, 3 units are tenanted investments.

For Sale from \$525,000 (plus GST if applicable).

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DA Lodged for Golf Clubhouse at Lovedale Farm's Championship Course

Marking another milestone for the new \$1 billion world-class residential golfing community in the heart of Hunter Valley wine country, Capital Corporation has lodged plans for the golf course clubhouse that is set to become a vibrant hub for Lovedale Farm golfers and the wider Hunter Valley community.

The DA lodgement follows the success of Lovedale Farm's first stage release of designer homes, with over 70% sold, and a combined value of \$55 million.

The 1,200 sqm clubhouse is designed to elevate the 18-hole championship golf experience at Lovedale Farm and will include a range of facilities tailored to both golf enthusiasts and lifestyle-focused residents. Features include a reception lounge, pro-shop, a signature restaurant and bar, an exclusive members' lounge, and event spaces for weddings, meetings and conferences.

"This Clubhouse is a cornerstone of our British heartland-style golf course with modern golfing amenities and an exceptional hospitality offering for players and residents. The building is designed to complement the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape," said Jim Hunter, Director of Capital Corporation.

"Lovedale Farm's residential and tourism precincts have been purposefully designed around the golf course – not the other way around. This is a clear reflection of our commitment to establishing Australia's leading lifestyle and golfing destination."

Membership of Lovedale Farm Golf Club will provide preferred tee times, access to the members' lounge, and exclusive discounts on cart hire, food and beverage and services. Residents of Lovedale Farm will receive additional benefits including waived joining fees and reduced green fees as part of their ownership privileges.



The Lovedale Farm masterplan, developed by award-winning architects Hachem, brings together a considered vision for leisure and community living in Hunter Valley wine country. The Clubhouse sits within the broader vision that includes the championship golf course, a premium resort, a vibrant dining precinct and high-end residential offering.

Capital Corporation has also announced the first release of land, offering generous blocks ranging from 1,100 to 3,000 sqm.

Lovedale Farm is expected to deliver approximately 1,250 jobs during construction and inject over \$300 million into the local economy. Once complete, the 240-hectare, precinct on Wine Country Drive is projected to contribute \$100 million per annum to the Hunter Valley region, further enhancing its reputation as a key tourism and lifestyle destination.

The Lovedale Farm display suite at Hunter Valley Gardens is now open and the first on site display home is scheduled for completion in October 2025.

Babbingtons Restaurant & Bar Celebrates 40 years

Babbingtons Restaurant & Bar, located inside the Apollo International Hotel in Charlestown, is celebrating four decades.

Over the years, Babbingtons has been the backdrop to everything from first dates and engagements to milestone birthdays and long lunches. It's even played host to famous musicians, comedians, and sports stars — including members of The Screaming Jets, John English, and cast members from Home and Away and Neighbours.

One of Newcastle's longest-standing dining venues, Babbingtons was once known for its fine dining, signature white tablecloths, and floor-to-ceiling glass windows. While the experience has evolved, touches of its classic charm remain — including crisp linen napkins and a focus on quality service. Following a full refurbishment and refresh last year, the restaurant now offers a more relaxed and accessible dining experience without compromising on quality. It also features a stylish, intimate bar area, proudly serving what many guests call "the best cocktails in Newcastle."

"Babbingtons has always been more than just a restaurant — it's a place where memories are made," says Maree Bendeich, Sales & Marketing Coordinator at the hotel.

"We've had the privilege of being part of our guests' special moments for decades, and we're looking forward to being part of many more to come."



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Next-generation terminal opens at Newcastle Airport

Newcastle Airport's brand-new Arrivals is now open, built with the region in mind, ready to support more passengers, more destinations and more growth as it delivers on its goal of being the airport the region deserves.

Newcastle Airport has opened the terminal ahead of schedule, marking a major milestone in the region's aviation and infrastructure history. From 29 July, all arriving passengers will enter through the modern, spacious terminal, a significant step in building the airport the Hunter deserves.

Initially slated for an August launch, the terminal has opened early, a testament to the dedicated work of over 2,000 individuals and more than 314,000 hours of construction. This major infrastructure project has been delivered in partnership with local contractors and businesses, ensuring economic benefits flow directly into Hunter communities.

"This terminal is a major investment in the Hunter's future," said Linc Horton, CEO of Newcastle Airport.

"Delivered over four years, creating 4,400 jobs in the long term, and giving our region a terminal ready to grow beyond 2.5 million passengers a year. Our shareholder councils have built a lasting legacy with this project. Now it's time to make the region proud."

Designed for long-term growth, the expansion more than doubles the airport's capacity enabling it to grow from 1.2 million to over 2.5 million passengers annually. The terminal includes new swing-gate functionality, allowing for transition between domestic and international operations.

Built with sustainability at its core, the facility is targeting a 5 Star Green Star 'As Built' rating and builds on Newcastle Airport's Level 4+ Airport Carbon Accreditation, the highest held by any airport in Australia.

Key improvements include:

- A larger arrivals hall with new signage, digital wayfinding and smoother connections from car park to gate
- Enhanced pick-up zones and two hours of free parking in Long Stay Saver
- The arrival of Crosswinds Coffee Co., serving locally roasted Sprocket coffee and fresh food
- Wide-body aircraft capability, completed runway upgrades and new aerobridges to support future international flights

The terminal's opening paves the way for the international departures area to welcome passengers later this year. Flights to Bali commence from 21 October, with direct flights to Perth in September with both routes already seeing strong demand.

"This is the largest investment in the region's aviation tourism history. With this terminal now operational, we're ready to welcome more visitors, open new trade channels and connect the Hunter to more of the world," Mr Horton added.

Newcastle Airport continues to expand its offering, with 250+ flights each week and more destinations to come as the terminal evolves.



NSW invests \$26.2 million in low-emissions technology

The NSW Government is investing \$26.2 million to spearhead the next wave of emissions reduction technologies, supporting cutting-edge solutions which deliver both environmental and economic benefits to the state.

The Clean Technology Innovation grants support 13 projects across NSW to advance their technologies from research to commercial businesses, these include:

The Government is delivering this significant funding injection as part of the \$275 million Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative to fuel new investment, new jobs and new opportunities for NSW businesses, industries, communities and workers.

The grants focus on developing and implementing technologies that don't currently exist in the marketplace but have the capability to reduce emissions and assist with the state's net zero targets. Each project will progress through stages including design, prototyping, construction, testing and real-world scenarios to ensure commercial viability. Funding ranges from \$400,000 to \$5 million per project.

In addition to the NSW Government's funding, the projects have also successfully attracted \$46.9 million in private investment, demonstrating strong industry confidence in their potential.

The successful projects must be completed by 2028, delivering tangible outcomes in the state's transition to a low-carbon economy. Three of these projects are based in the Hunter.

FPR Energy Limited, Mayfield West - \$4,850,000 - Commercialise FPR Energy's particle based concentrated solar thermal technology, to provide long duration green heat and power. These battery energy storage systems cater to industrial, commercial and residential needs.

Renewable Metals Pty Ltd, Muswellbrook - \$1,100,000 - Assess the feasibility of NSW's first commercial lithium battery recycling refinery. It would help build a local recycling industry, support clean technology and keep valuable battery materials in use across energy, transport and industry.

Kardinia Energy Pty, Shortland - \$2,255,000 - Setting up the world's first commercial manufacturing facility for Printed Solar – lightweight, flexible solar panels that can go where traditional ones can't. It opens up new markets and takes clean energy to more places.

Government backs renewable boost to Hunter

The Federal Government is securing Australia's energy future with a Hydrogen HeadStart investment in Orica's Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub in a \$438 million announcement. The project will secure the future of ammonia and explosives manufacturing at Kooragang Island by reducing its reliance on gas. This keeps local manufacturing competitive and sustainable, supporting jobs and the long-term future of the industry in the Hunter.

Located on Kooragang Island in the heart of the Hunter Region, the project will deploy a 50 MW electrolyser powered by renewable energy, producing around 4,700 tonnes of green hydrogen each year. By switching from gas to green hydrogen, the project will also significantly cut emissions from Orica's ammonia production facility and help produce green ammonia for domestic use across mining, agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

It will also help open Australia to exporting clean renewable hydrogen and renewable ammonia overseas, and the jobs and economic benefits that will come with it as the world looks to decarbonise.

Delivered through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), the funding will bring down costs and accelerate the uptake of renewable hydrogen in heavy industry.

Before funding is released, Orica will work closely with ARENA to meet a number of conditions and demonstrate progress toward key milestones.

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*[National Listener Survey - conducted by McNair Yellow Squares - Greater Newcastle 2024 Survey Wave 1].

Lovells breaks ground on new flagship engineering, manufacturing and retail centre

As part of its 95th anniversary and long-standing commitment to innovation, Lovells Group has announced the launch of a new state-of-the-art flagship engineering, manufacturing and retail centre in Newcastle.

The upcoming 5000 sqm facility, adjacent to Lovells' main manufacturing site, will complement Lovells' existing R&D hub in Edwardstown, South Australia, and form a critical part of the company's national innovation ecosystem – supporting the development of next-generation products across electric vehicles, emerging drivetrain technologies, and advanced suspension platforms.

The investment, valued at \$12 million, will create 24 new specialist roles across engineering, advanced manufacturing, product design, and compliance, also absorbing the existing Lovells Special Products manufacturing and design facility. The centre will offer dedicated capabilities for:

- Advanced product fatigue, corrosion and performance testing and evaluation
- Vehicle dynamic stability analysis
- Fitment engineering for both OEM and aftermarket applications
- Design and manufacture of electro-technology solutions for EV, ET (electric truck) and EB (electric bus) charging systems.

"Our new Newcastle R&D Centre reinforces our commitment to local innovation, advanced engineering, and our role in supporting the future of transport," said Simon Crane, Managing Director of Lovells Group.

"Together with our Edwardstown site and The Bend testing facilities in South Australia, this centre will ensure Lovells remains on the cutting edge of suspension, load-carrying, and towing system development."

As part of its commitment to future research and design capabilities, Lovells Industrial Systems is also transitioning its production facilities to induction heating to support a broader strategy focused on cutting emissions, improving energy efficiency, and phasing out gas use. The company plans to have three induction units operational by the end of the year and is aiming to achieve a fully gas-free operation within three to four years.

"Induction heating gives us faster, more precise control, allowing us to heat suspension spring steel – which makes up around 40 per cent of our output, far more efficiently than gas," said Simon Crane, Managing Director of Lovells Group.

"It's a critical step in futureproofing our facility and cutting our reliance on fossil fuels."



6 Star Green Star certification for Honeysuckle Drive development

DOMA's latest Newcastle office development, 42HD at 42 Honeysuckle Drive, has been officially awarded a 6 Star Green Star certification by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA).

Representing world-leading standards in sustainable design and construction, this recognition places the building among the top tier of sustainable commercial properties in Australia.

Standing as Newcastle's first mass timber commercial office building, 42 Honeysuckle Drive features an innovative structure

constructed with cross-laminated timber (CLT) floors and glue-laminated timber (GLT) columns and beams.

"In contrast to concrete, timber stores embodied carbon. Therefore, by replacing concrete with timber, this building provides a 50% reduction in embodied carbon. The office building will also have an all-electric HVAC system and return solar energy savings of around 40,600 kWh pa," Development Director, Chris Farrington explained.

Several initiatives have contributed to the building's 6 Star rating, including energy efficient and climate resilient design, responsibly sourced materials, and carbon reducing construction. Advanced workplace sensors that monitor air quality, temperature and lighting levels, together with electric vehicle charging stations also contributed to the 6 Star rating.

The eight-storey, 5,830 sqm building is now fully leased, with major tenants including Ausgrid, Adecco, and Medilogic.

Lake Mac development tops \$1 billion

The total value of development approvals in Lake Macquarie has cracked the billion-dollar mark again in Lake Macquarie, despite a nationwide downturn in development investment.

Analysis of development application data over the 2024-2025 financial year shows Lake Macquarie City Council approved 1,824 development applications and DA modifications worth a total \$1.02 billion, with Morisset topping the list for hot-spot suburbs.

The new figures mean Council has now approved more than \$8 billion worth of development across the city since 2019.

Director Development Planning and Regulation David Antcliff said streamlining processes over the past five years had resulted in quicker approval times and aided the city's growth and transformation.

"Approving high-quality, sustainable commercial and residential development has helped Lake Macquarie transition rapidly from an economy based around mining and traditional industry to one focusing on services, health, tourism and innovation," he said.

"It sets up our city to grow and prosper for the next generation and provides employment opportunities for younger people, so we don't lose them to Sydney and other capital cities."

South-west Lake Macquarie continued to firm as one of the Hunter Region's most significant growth areas, with Morisset home to the highest value of new DAs approved (\$49.6 million), and Wyee Point (\$31.4 million), Wyee (\$30.7 million) and Cooranbong (\$27.6 million) all in the top 10 suburbs.

Lake Macquarie Mayor Adam Shultz said he was optimistic for the year ahead, with interest rates easing, and new Council measures approved earlier this month to attract new investment, such as increased incentives for affordable housing developers.

"The 2024-2025 data shows Lake Mac is in a very strong position and remains a place where people want to build and invest," he said.

"We will continue to work hard, streamline our processes and do what we can to attract further quality development for the good of the city."

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2025-26

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Welcome to the 2025–26 Hunter Business Function Guide, an annual special coverage by HBR to help businesspeople with planning and running a successful event in the Hunter region.

The Hunter has a well-earned reputation as an ideal location for business functions, with a growing number of local, Australian and overseas businesspeople experiencing the excellent locations and services available.

One of the exceptional strengths of the Hunter is its extremely broad range of venues available, satisfying all tastes and budgets. The Hunter can readily accommodate any type of function, from small, intimate gatherings, to large expos and international symposiums. The locations vary immensely, from the CBDs of major centres, to water-front venues, vineyard experiences and rural retreats.

The Hunter also has a wide range of excellent support services to help ensure that you have a successful event. Whether you need help with just one aspect of an event or someone to take responsibility for almost the entire event, the Hunter has an experienced organisation ready to work with you.

The region is also unique in its range of accommodation, dining options and activities for delegates and visitors.

The Hunter is truly the perfect location for almost any type of business function.

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FUNCTION GUIDE TABLE 2025

Venues	Location	Room Capacity					Facilities	Onsite activities	Accom. rooms	See page
		Conference rooms	Max Area/M²	Max Cocktail	Max Theatre	Max Banquet				
Amanda's on the Edge	Pokolbin	2	N/A	45	N/A	N/A	In house catering	Restaurant	N/A	17
Anchorage Hotel & Spa	Port Stephens	7	144	160	160	110	AV equipment, screens, whiteboard, flip chart, sounds system and WiFi	Spa treatments at on-site Spa Lucca, cocktail masterclasses, whisky tastings, high tea by the sea, sailing experience, The Galley Kitchen – all-day dining, Moby's Bar – Bar, onsite parking, two pools, one adults-only, poolside bar	80	2
Apollo International Hotel	Charlestown	4	125	200	110	100	Microphone, wireless internet, blue-tooth audio, tv, data projector screen, clothes tables, water, mints, whiteboard, flipchart	Inground pool & gym, Complimentary Parking, Free WIFI, Restaurant & Bar, Breakfast Buffet.	95	4
Bay Sailing Centre	Soldiers Point	1	N/A	70	50	40	Wireless internet, TV	N/A	N/A	12
Earp Distilling Co	Carrington	3	415	500	200	250	Accessible restrooms, even graded flooring for wheelchair using persons and persons with mobility issues, Aircon, Dance floor, Filtered water, Flip chart, Lighting, Microphone, Natural Light, On-site parking, pens & paper, Projector, Smoking Area, Speakers, Stage, TV, Whiteboard, Wifi, Chairs (up to 100), Tables, Basic table cloths and napkins, Basic cutlery and plateware, Food & Beverage packages.	Distillery Tour, Tasting Flights, Blending Class, Spirit School	N/A	10
Fort Scratchley Function Centre	Newcastle	1	246	200	150	140	On-site parking, in-house catering, dancefloor, data projector, screen, flipchart, WiFi, whiteboard, lectern and wired microphone.	Contemporary, flexible venue with uninterrupted ocean views; north facing deck for alfresco drinks and breaks; access/tours of Fort Scratchley Historic Site. Tailored catering available, designed by our Executive Chef.	N/A	9

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FUNCTION GUIDE TABLE 2025

Venues	Location	Room Capacity					Facilities	Onsite activities	Accom. rooms	See page
		Conference rooms	Max Area/M²	Max Cocktail	Max Theatre	Max Banquet				
HIA Home Inspirations	Mayfield West	3	N/A	N/A	80	N/A	Data projector unit, Microphones, audio, video conferencing (Board room only), WiFi	N/A	N/A	18
Maitland Town Hall	Maitland	8	460	300	380	300	All events held within the Maitland Town Hall Main Hall utilising any audio/visual/lighting equipment, will need to work directly with Councils preferred inducted contractor being Scion Audio and Events.	N/A	N/A	8
Merewether Surfhouse	Merewether	2	390	350	250	250	1 x 65" HD Plasma Screen and 2 x 85" QLED Plasma Screens. 5 microphones available, as well as a stage to hire. Guest WiFi is also available	Restaurant, Rooftop Bar and Mexican Beach Bar	N/A	11
Murrook Culture Centre	Williamstown	3	502	600	420	240	3 data projectors and motorised screens, In-room sound system with wireless microphones, Wi-Fi, whiteboards, flip charts, lectern, tea and coffee station in each function room, catering packages available, ample carpark	Cultural Workshops & Training, Sand Dune Adventures Quad Bike tours, Cultural Services, Murrook Café, Cultural Gallery and Interactive Experience Centre, Retail, Parklands.	N/A	14
Newcastle City Hall	Newcastle	7	382	500	805	300	Accessible rooms (x7); in-house catering, data projector, screen, flipchart, Wi-Fi, whiteboard, lectern and wired microphone; notepads, pens, mints, still and sparkling water all included.	Historic city-centre venue; balcony overlooking Civic Park; versatile rooms for breakouts and exhibitions; 2000 accommodation rooms within 10mins walk; tailored catering featuring regional produce with menus designed by our Executive Chef.	N/A	9
Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club	Newcastle	5	N/A	300	200	300	Microphone, 65"+ TVs, lecterns, onsite catering, tea+coffee station, wireless internet.	Learn to Sail opportunities	N/A	13
Newcastle Racecourse	Broadmeadow	12	2240	1800	1500	750	Onsite catering by in-house chefs, Over 900 complimentary car parks, PA, sound and data projection systems, Wireless internet access, Handheld microphones, projector screens, TV monitors, Disabled access and equipment-friendly entries, All rooms fully air-conditioned and most with natural lighting, Event supervisor and standard, Note pads, pens, mints, iced water.	Race Day hospitality packages, Beautifully maintained outdoor lawns for break-out sessions, Scenic backdrops for photos and outdoor events, flexible, partitionable spaces for tailored experiences, Support from a dedicated Events Team from planning to execution	N/A	15





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FUNCTION GUIDE TABLE 2025

Venues	Location	Room Capacity					Facilities	Onsite activities	Accom. rooms	See page
		Conference rooms	Max Area/M²	Max Cocktail	Max Theatre	Max Banquet				
NOAH'S On The Beach	Newcastle	8	382	300	300	200	Lectern, lectern microphone, roving microphone, Data projector, projector screen, wireless internet, whiteboard, flipchart stand.	Restaurant & Bar, Free Parking	90	3
Pacific Dunes - Greenhouse	Medowie - Port Stephens	1	270	180	200	144	Full integrated data projector, dop down projector screen, 4 roaming microphones, mic stand, wifi internet, lectern, iphone / HDMI / PC / mac / connectors etc, white board, flip chart, black out blinds, free onsite parking, accessible amenities, covered terrace for break in the kitchen garden, tea & coffee station and catering all available.	Greenhouse - Restaurant & Bar 18 hole championship golf course with practice facilities, fully stocked golf shop, outdoor bar terrace, kids play area, Thursday night trivia, Sunday live music	N/A	16
The Valley Brewhouse	Nulkaba, Hunter Valley	3	600	150	120	120	Projector, microphone, wireless internet, own bar, own kitchen, own toilets, disabled access, private entry	Brewery for tastings & tours, Potters Apartments onsite which has tennis courts, swimming pool, local golf courses, wineries, etc	68	6
Wallsend Diggers	Wallsend	4	600	400	350	300	Cordless microphone, built-in data projectors, complimentary Wi-Fi, lectern, whiteboard	Multiple food & beverage outlets, outdoor undercover courtyard & children's playground, wheelchair friendly	48	7

SUPPORTING SERVICES

The Hunter Region is blessed with a wide variety of organisations that can provide services and expertise to help make your event be a success.

COMPANY	SERVICES	PAGE
Beyond Ballooning	Team building corporate flights	16
Nova Cruises	Team building cruises	18
Scion Audio & Events	Audio, visual, staging & event equipment	5



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 SPRINGS

TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR NEXT EVENT A SUCCESS

It can be a demanding task to organise a successful event, particularly if it is large or it's your first time. One of the more disappointing aspects for the organiser is that most attendees probably have no idea of how much work has been involved. Those without function organising experience often think it is just a matter of booking the venue and sending out the invitations. The organisers are often not really thought about unless something very memorable occurs, be it positive or negative.

Every event is different and will have its own requirements; however, the following general tips will help you to achieve a successful event.

Hiring professional help

There are a range of local businesses that can help with your event, from assisting with one aspect (like catering) to organising almost the entire event.

Even if you gain the services of an event planner, this does not mean that you will have no responsibilities in the planning stages. First and foremost, you must have good communications with the planner and ensure both sides have a clear understanding of the type of event, its goals and its budget. The event planner will also require input from you along the way with necessary information and options requiring a decision. These should be attended to promptly but with due consideration. In the end the event planner wants the event to meet the client's expectations, so your input is important and required.

Initial planning

The first task is to clearly define the reason for the event and what you hope to achieve from it. Finalise the type of event or function it will be – launch, networking session, end of year party, exhibition, seminar, team building etc. Next set the budget available, including both revenue streams (if applicable) and expenses. If it is re-run of a similar earlier event, these stages will be much easier. Make sure to also have realistic and measurable targets.

Event budget

Set a budget at the start and monitor it as each stage progresses. It is usually best if you can allocate some of the budget for unforeseen expenses as these often occur.

Date and venue

Much care must be taken when setting the date and venue as it is not usually easy to change these. When considering the date take into account public and school holidays, other major or competing events, staff and equipment availability and any other issue that may restrict the timing.

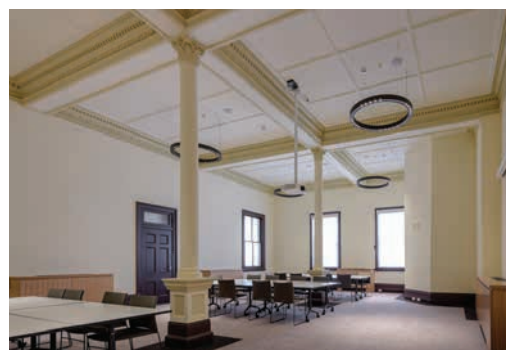
Risk management

Create a risk management plan and ensure any appropriate insurance is in place and current. Create a contingency plan for factors outside of your direct control on the day.

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Timeline

Prepare a project timeline with tasks that must be accomplished by specific dates. These may include:

- When to announce the event
- Preparation of promotional material
- Selection of caterer and menu
- Selection of entertainment
- Organisation of audio-visual needs
- Selection and confirmation of speakers
- Selection of accommodation
- Organisation of insurance or permits
- Preparation of a contingency plan for the event
- Organisation of transportation
- Organisation of marketing, signage and social media
- Finalisation of program
- Confirmation of attendees
- Preparation of event material
- Organising set up

At the event

The better the planning and preparation, the better the chance that all will go smoothly on the day. Often it won't go exactly to plan, but most attendees will be unaware. Try to stay calm, even if there are a few hiccups, and finally try to enjoy yourself.

After the event

When the event is finished, you will need to remove equipment and possibly rubbish from the venue. Depending upon the nature of the event, sponsors and participants may be thanked and possibly given a questionnaire for feedback. In the days following the event have a debrief session on the event, covering the successful aspects as well as those that could have been improved. If appropriate, a report on the event can be sent to participants and sponsors. Plans for future events can also be included.



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MARKETING YOUR EVENT

One of the most important parts of organising an event is letting people know about it. If there are no attendees, there is no event.

There are many paths available to do this. Advertising for your event should involve a mixture of the tactics depending on your target audience and where they seek out event information.

Traditional marketing tactics

Direct mail marketing campaigns, press releases and hard copy advertising are a great way to announce the event and know that it is getting to the right target audience.

Social media

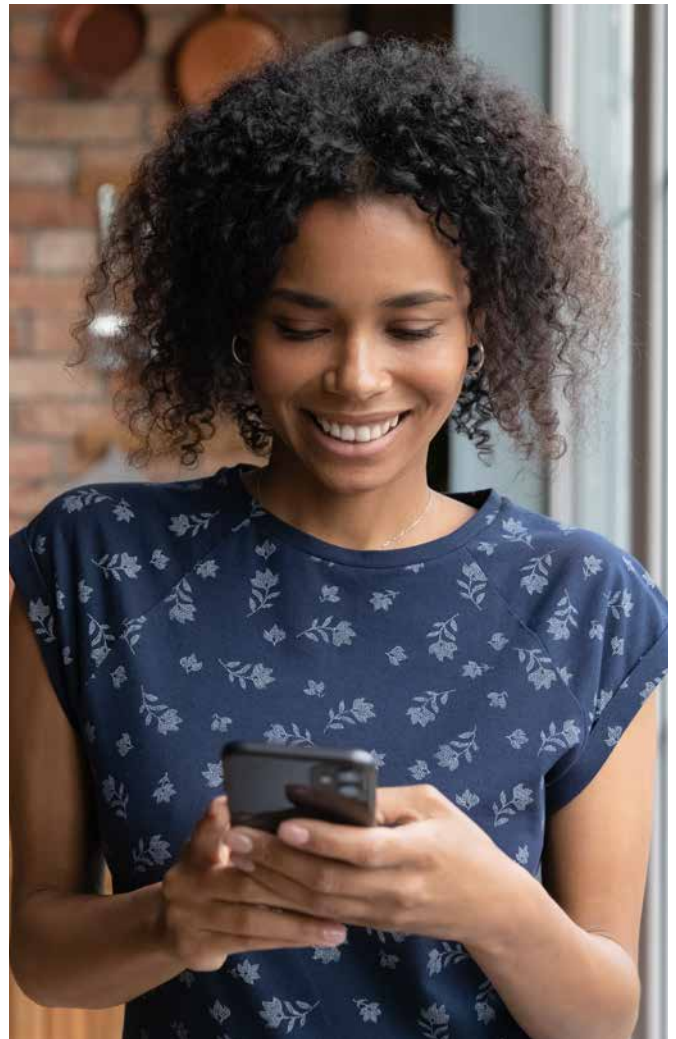
Social media is an effective way to advertise your event. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are an easy way to reach people.

Use attendees

When people sign up for your event, provide them with opportunities to share the information about your event on social media or via email.

Invite major industry players

Contact prominent people in the industry, who also have a following on their social networks. Invite these people to your event and it's sure to get coverage on a lot of related socials.



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Market the speakers

If your business has the budget to book a well-known speaker, it will create more hype. When marketing your speakers focus on their education, experience, and interesting facts about their lives. This will generate interest in hearing these facts and experiences live. Feature your speakers in your media releases, hard copy advertising and social media.

Testimonials

Testimonials are great if your business organises an annual event that is well attended, especially by regular attendees and repeat vendors. Get testimonials from attendees and vendors about your key outcomes for the event e.g. the event was informative, fun and I made some key contacts.

Corporate sponsorships

Gaining corporate sponsors for your event is a plus for both parties. When the sponsors advertise the event, not only is it good marketing for the event, it is also a good marketing strategy for their company.

Free tickets

Another great way to promote your event is to offer the participating sponsors, speakers, industry players and vendors free admission tickets. You can request that they mention the event to all their contacts or share it on social media.



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BOOKING THE RIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

What would your audience enjoy?

Think about the type of attendees that will be at your event. What sort of entertainment would be suitable? If they are an older crowd they may not want to listen to an AC/DC tribute band. Similarly, a young crowd wishing to celebrate probably aren't going to enjoy a classical violinist.

Entertainment budget

When it comes to entertainment for events it is easy to go way over budget. Make sure you are given a reasonable budget and stick to it. Also think realistically. There is no way you are going to be able to afford David Copperfield but there is always up and coming magicians that can be just as entertaining.

How big is the entertainment space?

The amount of space you have will have an impact on the type of entertainment you book. If it is only a small venue think about hiring an entertainer that doesn't take up much space and won't overpower the event.

Risk assessment

Depending on the act you are planning to hire it is worth reviewing your organisation's insurance and go through a risk assessment with your venue. The entertainment that you hire can affect the risk involved with organising an event e.g. acrobats or magicians that work with fire.



What effect will the entertainment have on venue hire duration?

The amount of set up your act has could affect the amount of time you need to hire the venue. You may need to pay the venue for access to the space before and after the event. When hiring an act make sure you find out how long it takes for them to set up and make sure it is in your budget to cover these costs.

See your entertainers perform

This one is a no brainer. You need to see your entertainment perform before your event to make sure they are the right choice. If you are unable to find the time to see them live try to see a video of their performance. Youtube is often an easy way to do this.



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ORGANISING A WORK SOCIAL DAY

The Hunter region offers a wide spectrum of activities for organising a work social day, from adventure parks, race days, wine tours, brewery tours, team building events and many more.

Many businesses organise activities for their staff in an effort to build a more effective team, use it as a reward, to increase job satisfaction and to help get to know staff. Work social days are a great way to achieve these outcomes but if they are poorly organised these activities can fail to produce and even dampen morale if it is seen as just a work obligation.

The following tips will help you with planning your team building activities.

Decide on objectives and a budget

What is the purpose? Different activities will gain different outcomes. Is it to celebrate a significant business accomplishment, reward staff, let staff get to know each other better without work pressures, help staff see the "bigger picture" or some other purpose? The activity needs to be selected to meet the goals and keep within budget, for example a wine tour would be a great way to celebrate a business accomplishment, whereas an informal lunch is better way to introduce a new staff member.

Select an activity suitable for your whole team

If you have less active members, it is not a great idea to organise anything too strenuous. Don't select an activity that is likely to have an extreme range in abilities. Don't let the activity be overly competitive – you can have winners if you



want, but make sure that others don't feel like losers. Keep in mind not everyone drinks alcohol or feels comfortable around people who are drinking or can eat the same type of food.

Pick a convenient time

Employees will be most receptive to an activity that is during work hours and does not interfere with their personal time. When scheduling the activity, keep your employees' schedules and personal obligations in mind. If you have employees with children in day care or school, make sure that the social day does not interfere with their pick-up schedule or require them to plan additional childcare.



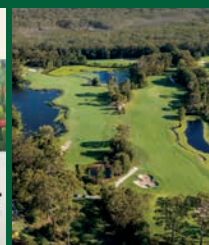
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Consider help

Ask possible venues for tips, what has worked before etc. You can even consider hiring an external professional to organise the whole or some of the activities.

Don't forget travel time

You may find a great location, but staff may not be happy if they have to travel an extra hour or two each way. If you are really set on a location a little more distant, consider hiring a mini-bus and also use the travel time effectively.

Provide food

Make sure food is involved in the planning as no one is happy if they are hungry or if finding something to eat is a chore.

Send out a questionnaire about food requirements and allergies.

Don't make it about the business

Don't bore staff with speeches or work-related talks. Make the day interesting and memorable. The best activities are those a bit different, not something many of the staff do on a regular basis.

Encourage staff to mix

Forget about staff hierarchy. Make all staff feel like they are on an equal footing. If you have a large number of staff, consider nametags with just their first name. If the activity involves teams, try to have teams comprised of staff members that normally don't work closely.

Get post-event feedback

After the event, have employees provide anonymous feedback on the team building day. By knowing what your employees liked and disliked about the event, you can better plan team-building activities in the future. If you planned the day for a specific reason, evaluate the outcome after the event.

Ease work pressure

Make sure that you reduce the employees' workload that typically gets done during the scheduled team building time so that they do not have to work nights or weekends to get their jobs done. You may need to hire temporary staff. Take into account the downtime when setting schedules and targets.

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SELECTING YOUR VENUE

One of the most important decisions when planning a business event is the venue. Assuming you do not have suitable in-house facilities, you will likely be faced with a range of venue options and these must be evaluated early in the process. The following are factors to consider when you are deciding upon the venue for your next event:

Location – The venue should be easy to get to for participants and attendees. It is usually good to be located close to most of attendees to minimise travel time and increase attendance. If you think many will use public transport then these links should be evaluated. If most will be driving then close-by parking facilities will be an important consideration.

Venue suitability – Obviously the venue must be the right size for your event. If it is too small you will not have enough room for everything you need as well as attendees. But if it is too large, it may feel quite dead and empty. If the venue is not air-conditioned you should consider ventilation or heating options, particularly if the event is being held in summer or winter. If extensive setting up is required, such as in an expo, then ease of access to the venue can be important. The venue also may need to be available for ample time before and after the event. Wheelchair and invalid access may also be a consideration.

Facilities & services – The available facilities and services provided by a venue can be of major benefit in the quality of an event, the total cost of an event and the ease of organisation. Check there is sufficient chairs and tables (if required). These days' microphones, audio visual facilities



and internet access are essential for many functions. If food and drink facilities are not available, or not available to the desired quality, then there are a number of excellent caterers available in the Hunter that can help.

Availability – The venue does of course need to be available. The earlier the venue is locked away, the better the chance of having it for your desired time. You will also have more flexibility in settling on a date if you start early.

Cost – Cost is always a factor to consider, particularly if operating on a tight budget but make sure you are taking all costs into account. For example a more expensive venue that provides additional facilities at no charge may well work out cheaper in the long run than a cheaper venue that provides little and you need to arrange additional facilities.

Venue staff – The quality of the venue staff is sometimes overlooked. Good venue staff are a major help both in the organisational phase and on the actual event day. Alarm bells should start ringing if you find them disinterested or they fail to respond to enquiries.

Other help – Don't be shy to ask other organisations that have had similar types of events about their experiences. Event organisers can take away most of the venue selection work. They also have more detailed intelligence on possible venues and the range of options available

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Keys to the City marks 60 years of the University of Newcastle's impact

The University of Newcastle has been presented with the Keys to the City in recognition of the Institution's historic and ongoing contribution to Newcastle's cultural, economic and social life.

The civic honour was formally conferred during a special graduation ceremony at City Hall on 18 July, celebrating the University's 60th anniversary and its enduring partnership with City of Newcastle.

Lord Mayor Ross Kerridge said City of Newcastle is proud to recognise the institution's six decades of service and its profound impact on generations of Novocastrians.

"The University and its students have played a pivotal role in transforming Newcastle into a city of learning, aspiration and progress. Their influence is woven through our city and communities," Cr Kerridge said.

"Over the past 60 years, the University has transformed lives and opened doors for tens of thousands of people in our city.

This honour particularly recognises the University's role in enabling so many 'first in family' students to go to university, and the University's ongoing commitment to providing educational opportunities for all."

The motion to bestow the Keys to the City was initiated by Cr Declan Clausen and supported by the elected Council in May, acknowledging the transformational power of education and the University's leadership in fostering access and equity through programs such as Yapug and Open Foundation.

"The University has long been a leader of inclusive education, with a deep commitment to equity that has delivered lasting benefits to our city, region, state, nation and beyond," Cr Clausen said.

"Our ongoing collaboration continues to be a cornerstone Newcastle's progress, from community health and sustainability to First Nations engagement and urban innovation.

"The University's central role in Newcastle's urban renewal, through developments like NUspace and the City Campus, has helped shape the vibrant city we are today."

The Keys were accepted on behalf of the University by Chancellor, the Hon. Patricia Forsythe AM. The ceremony also featured Auntie Cheryl Newton and Auntie Amanda Kelly, Elders in Residence at the University's Wollotuka Institute, alongside students and special guests from the University's 60-year history, including some who have been part of the community since its earliest days.

University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor Alex Zelinsky said the honour reflected the collective efforts of the entire University community.

Auntie Cheryl Newton, University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alex Zelinsky AO, Chancellor, the Hon. Patricia Forsythe AM, Lord Mayor, Dr Ross Kerridge and Auntie Amanda Kelly at the official presentation during the University's graduation ceremony at City Hall today.
Credit: University of Newcastle



Turning patient pain into start-up success

When cancer survivor and Newcastle native Cheryl Pollock was left with debilitating lymphoedema, she refused to settle for off-the-shelf solutions. Instead, she became her first customer, sketching prototypes on napkins and crafting homemade inserts to test a novel concept: using gentle, differential pressure (DP-Tx) to mobilise fluid and relieve pain.

Cheryl's relentless testing paid off. Early adopters, as well as fellow patients she met through local support groups, reported life-changing results. Their feedback became her north star, guiding iterative improvements and validating a clear market need. With minimal outside funding, she set up ChezLeon Pty Ltd, navigating the lean-start-up grind: cold-calling manufacturers, deciphering regulatory pathways, and pitching sceptical investors who preferred city-based med-tech ventures.

Her persistence has paid off with the official launch of her first product, the DP-Tx Bra Insert.

Built around patient centricity, the product speaks directly to survivors of breast cancer, mastitis sufferers, and post-surgical patients, an audience looking for alternatives to restrictive compression wear.

Cheryl's journey, from kitchen-bench designer to founder-CEO exemplifies start-up resilience: continuous customer engagement, rapid prototyping, and the courage to challenge industry norms. As Chezleon looks to secure local partnerships and eyes global expansion, it stands as proof that a founder's pain point can spark solutions with worldwide impact.



Construction of new homes to commence at former Waratah Gasworks

The NSW Government has achieved a major milestone in its remediation of the former Waratah Gasworks, with construction of new homes commencing in July.

Property and Development NSW (PDNSW) has completed remediation of 11 residential lots which were contaminated with soil and infrastructure left behind by the former gasworks operation. The remediation project takes in a total of 13 properties on Ellis and Turton Roads. Seven properties are being rebuilt, while four others will be sold on the private market.

The remediation work completed involved the excavation and removal of contaminated soil and gasworks infrastructure buried at the site of the former gasworks, which operated from 1889 to 1926.

The works are part of a \$25 million project that has so far removed more than 20,000 tonnes of gasworks impacted material.

Work included excavation and removal of a 56 m wide underground gasholder which extended to a depth of 6 m below the ground, along with tar wells, and purifier beds.

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"SECURE DESTRUCTION - GUARANTEED"

Three men are stuck in the gulag.

One asked, "What did you do to get here?"

First guy answers, "I was late to work, so they said I was sabotaging the Revolution."

Second guy answers, "I arrived early to work, so they accused me of being a careerist, seeking favour over my equals."

Third guy says, "I came exactly on time to work, so they accused me of owning an western watch."

The chairman of a big company found his car wouldn't start, so he called the car pool.

A cheerful voice answered, "Car pool!"

The chairman asked, "What cars do you have available?"

The voice replied, "Vans for factory runs, Mondeos for sales, BMWs for directors... and one big fancy Mercedes for Fatty, our chairman."

The chairman snapped, "Do you know who you're speaking to?"

"No," the voice replied.

"This is your chairman."

The voice paused and said, "Do you know who you're speaking to?"

"No," said the chairman.

"Good," said the voice. "So long, Fatty."

The Angel of Death said, "I've come for you."

The man replied, "Why? I'm fine, I'm happy, I'm healthy!"

The angel said, "You left your phone at home without locking it, and your wife found it."

Man gasped, "Alright then... let's go."

A Boeing 777 was lumbering along at just under 800 km/h at 33,000 feet when a cocky F-16 fighter jet flashed by at Mach 2.

The young F-16 pilot decided to show off. On his state-of-the-art radio, he told the 777 pilot, "Hey, Captain, watch this."

He did a barrel roll, climbed straight up, then came screaming down with a sonic boom.

The F-16 pilot asked the 777 pilot what he thought of that.

The 777 pilot replied, "That was truly impressive, but watch this."

The 777 chugged along steadily for about 5 minutes. Then the pilot came back on and said, "What did you think of that?"

Puzzled, the F-16 pilot asked, "What the heck did you do?"

The 777 pilot chuckled, "I stood up, stretched my legs, walked to the back, used the toilet, got a cup of coffee and a cinnamon roll, and secured the next three nights in a five-star hotel paid for by the company."

A woman doesn't come home one night. The next day she tells her husband that she had slept over at a girlfriend's house. The husband calls his wife's 10 best friends. None of them know anything about it.

A man doesn't come home one night. The next day he tells his wife that he had slept over at a friend's house. The wife calls her husband's 10 best men friends. Eight of them confirm that he had slept over, and two claim that he was still there.

The blind man went to buy a beer and asked how much it cost.

The saleswoman said, "It is \$5".

So he took out a \$5 and a \$50 bill and said "I know I have a \$5 bill and \$50 bill, but not sure which is which."

The saleswoman, wanting to rob him, touched the hand with the \$50 bill.

So he held out his hand with the \$5 and said, "I'm going to buy 10 beers then."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time."

— Leonard Bernstein



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